

House Armed Services Committee

DEMOCRATS

For immediate release: May 12, 2005

Ike Skelton, Ranking Member

http://wwwd.house.gov/hasc_democrats

Contact:

Loren Dealy,
HASC Democratic Communications
(202) 226-6339

Kira Maas,
Rep. Reyes
(202)-225-4831

Strategic Forces Subcommittee Addresses Defense Authorization Bill FY06

Washington D.C.—Today the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Strategic Forces marked up its portions of H.R.1815, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006.

Subcommittee Ranking Member, Silvestre Reyes (TX) remarked, "This legislation covers many bipartisan provisions, including initiatives to expand the potential for using smaller, cheaper satellites and to improve space acquisition."

"In the area of missile defense, I would like to see stronger testing requirements for missile defense systems being fielded. These systems must prove themselves through testing. We should not be willing buy a pig in a poke," concluded **Reyes**.

RELIABLE REPLACEMENT WARHEAD

This bill includes a RRW charter and study, with mandated objectives, including: reducing the likelihood of future nuclear testing and shrinking the size of the nuclear stockpile.

"We have taken important strides in this bill to make sure that the Reliable Replacement Warhead does not move us in the direction of new nuclear missions or return us to nuclear testing," said **Rep. John Spratt (SC)**. "We have stated in law that its objectives are to reduce the likelihood of a return to nuclear testing, partly by using proven components that are certifiable without further testing,"

Spratt continued, "We have also stipulated that these warheads, if built, will serve only the current missions of the existing stockpile, and will be accompanied by future reductions in nuclear weapons stockpile. The value of an RRW has yet to be proved, but the bill, as reported, will help to keep it within reasonable bounds."

"The jury is still out on whether the RRW will be the engine of transformation of the nuclear enterprise, and I intend to keep a careful eye on this process, but the parameters

we were able to establish today mark a critical step toward helping us conduct a study to determine the RRW's value," said **Rep. Ellen Tauscher (CA)**.

ROBUST NUCLEAR EARTH PENETRATOR

Funds for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP) study will be transferred from the Energy Department to the Defense Department. The goal of this shift is to ensure that the results of this study are used for conventional "bunker busters".

"I am pleased that today's agreement stymies the Bush Administration's effort to develop unpredictable and tremendously risky new nuclear weapons over the objections of Congress, and provides our military with resources to continue defeating conventional 'bunker busters,'" said **Rep. Ellen Tauscher (CA)**.

MISSILE DEFENSE

"The Missile Defense Agency has seen test after failed test—all on the taxpayer dime. Congress can't continue to pour funds into a program that's come nowhere near success—we need better accountability," commented **Rep. Ellen Tauscher (CA)**. "It's well past time that we commit to have missile defense testing done with the highest integrity and independence through the Defense Department's Office of Testing and Evaluation."

Rep. John Spratt (SC) added, "For years, we have called for rigorous testing, making the point that if we are going to have missile defense, we need to make sure it works before we spend billions of dollars on its deployment. My amendment is a significant step in that direction. It requires the Missile Defense Agency to schedule an actual intercept test as soon as practicable. This is the right move for fiscal responsibility as well as national security."

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY CLEAN-UP PROGRAMS

"The safe and timely cleanup of the Hanford site, in Washington state, is a nonpartisan and all-important issue," said **Rep. Rick Larsen (WA)**. "Yet, the Administration's budget for cleanup at the site is so low that it jeopardizes progress and puts the government at risk of not meeting cleanup deadlines."

"We have worked in the Committee to increase this amount, and I will continue working with my colleagues to ensure that the federal government follows through on its cleanup responsibilities at the Hanford site," **Larsen** concluded.

Information is not officially included in the final version of H.R.1815 until passed by the full House Armed Services Committee on May 18th.

###